

Fact Sheet on Expiring Unemployment Benefits

- On December 28th, 1.3 million Americans, including over 20,000 recent veterans, will have their entire unemployment benefits cut off unless Congress acts to continue the Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC) program. Nearly another 1.9 million will lose their unemployment benefits during the first six months of next year if the EUC program expires.
- Even with years of consistent private-sector job growth, our economy still has 1.3 million *fewer* jobs today compared to the beginning of the “great recession” six years ago, and there are still nearly 3 unemployed workers for every available job.
- It would be unprecedented to allow the federal UI program to expire when long-term unemployment (as % of the labor force) is at least twice as high as it was at the expiration of every previous program – going back to 1958. Long-term unemployment remains near historic levels, with 37.3% of the unemployed without work for over six months. This went up in November from 36%
- The number of weeks of *federal* UI benefits has dropped significantly – from a maximum of 73 weeks two years ago to 47 weeks now. (Maximum total weeks, federal and state, are down from 99 to 73.) All but 3 states now receive *less* than the maximum. Average maximum state and federal UI is now 54 weeks. CRS estimates that total weeks of benefits have dropped across the states by 36% compared to two years ago.
- Unemployment benefits are very modest, averaging only \$300 a week.
- Unemployment insurance also helps our economic recovery by supporting consumer demand. CBO estimates that allowing the federal UI program to expire would cost our economy 200,000 jobs, and the President’s Council of Economic Advisers projects a loss of 240,000 jobs.
- The Emergency Unemployment Compensation Extension Act of 2013 (H.R.3546/S.1747) would extend the current EUC program for a year.